



Oregon State Chamber of Commerce

2017 Legislative Priorities

(Adopted 12.14.16; Revised 1.6.17)

The 2017 OSCC Legislative Priorities represents the legislative priorities of Oregon's local business communities as represented by the 84 local Chambers of Commerce members of the Oregon State Chamber of Commerce.

The OSCC is organized to give a voice to the local business communities throughout Oregon in support of policies that enable business success, job growth and income growth in each of our local communities. We believe a healthy business climate, and the jobs that such a business climate creates, is the key to building up our local communities, adequately funding social services and making our state prosperous.

The 2017 OSCC Legislative Agenda is a reflection of our collective desire to see that every Oregon community is able to grow and develop a vibrant local economy that can support each community's needs.

For 2017, the OSCC requests that the Oregon legislature take immediate action to address Oregon's transportation infrastructure needs. The OSCC also asks that the Oregon Legislature "pause" on any additional measures that would impose new costs or regulatory challenges for local businesses. Local business communities across Oregon need time to deal with the new 2015 & 2016 laws without additional costs, challenges and uncertainty.

The Members of the OSCC are united in support of:

1. **Comprehensive transportation funding package (with real low carbon fuel standard cost containment).**
2. **Pre-emption of local employment regulations.**
3. **Expanding eligibility for the 2013 'small business tax cut'.**
4. **Increased availability and affordability of workforce housing.**
5. **Increased resources for mental health programs and homelessness prevention.**
6. **Land use/UGB expansion for industrial development and housing.**

The Members of the OSCC are united in opposition to:

1. **Predictive Scheduling mandate.**
2. **Employer-funded 'paid family leave' program.**
3. **'Cap and Trade,' carbon tax, or *Cleaner Air Oregon* regulations that imposes burdensome costs on local manufacturers.**
4. **Increasing damage awards for liability, medical lawsuits.**
5. **Elimination of the small business tax cut.**
6. **Taxes not supported by the business community.**

2017 Legislative Priorities Detailed Summary

The Members of the OSCC are united in support of:

- 7. Comprehensive transportation funding package (with real low carbon fuel standard cost containment).**
A comprehensive transportation funding package is the highest pro-growth priority of the unified business community in 2017. It is a staple of the Oregon Business Plan. However, many of our key business association partners believe that an increase in the gas tax should be contingent on full repeal of the low carbon fuel standard or real cost containment in the standard. Without it, the low carbon fuel standard will begin to exact a heavy cost on motorists and eliminate the ability to raise gas taxes for future transportation project funding.
- 8. State Spending Reform (PERS, Medicaid, Personnel costs)**
State expenditures are now growing faster than revenues. State revenue has grown 40% since 2009. In that same time, PERS costs have grown 140% and Medicaid costs have grown 134%. Slowing the unsustainable growth in state government costs is a major initiative of the business community which OSCC supports.
- 9. Pre-emption of local employment regulations.**
The business community is concerned about local workplace scheduling mandates coming out of Portland. Our experience from 2015 and 2016 is that the City of Portland passes local mandates which creates pressure on the legislature to pass similar new employment regulations on the rest of the state.
- 10. Expanding eligibility for the 2013 'small business tax cut'.**
The 'small business tax cut' was passed by the 2013 Legislature in the PERS "Grand Bargain." The tax cut is a lower rate (starting at 7% instead of 9%) on the income of pass-through businesses (S Corps, LLCs, partnerships) with at least one employee. OSCC believes that eligibility for the tax cut should be expanded to sole proprietors and other 'mom and pop' family businesses.
- 11. Increased availability and affordability of workforce housing.**
The lack of affordable housing options for local employees is a top-tier concern for local business communities across the state. Not only is there a shortage of local affordable housing, there is a shortage of local market-rate housing as well. OSCC will support measures to increase housing supply.
- 12. Increased resources for mental health programs and homelessness prevention.**
Local communities and downtowns across the state are feeling the effects of the proliferation of homelessness, much of which stems from lack of available treatment options for people suffering from mental health issues. For the first time, local business communities across the state are coming together to help find solutions.
- 13. Land use/UGB expansion for industrial development and housing.**
Availability of land for new industries, new jobs, and affordable housing is critical to support local economic growth.

The Members of the OSCC are united in opposition to:

- 7. Predictive Scheduling mandate.**
The business community is prepared to defend against this mandate as the City of Portland has made its intentions known that it will impose this mandate on local employers. Such a mandate would require employers to guarantee employee schedules weeks in advance under the threat of penalties or additional wages due when schedules change.

8. Employer-funded 'paid family leave' program.

An extension of the paid sick leave mandate that would require that employers offer extended paid leave – in the range of 4 to 6 weeks – for qualifying events. Would likely require a new bureaucracy to administer along with a new funding stream (ie. tax). OSCC will oppose additional taxes on employers to fund this program.

9. 'Cap and Trade,' carbon tax, or *Cleaner Air Oregon* regulations that imposes burdensome costs on local manufacturers.

There are several threats facing local manufacturers on the issue of tighter air emissions controls. A 'cap and trade' or carbon tax would impose up to \$3 billion in additional taxes per year solely on manufacturers. It is also known that the 'Cleaner Air Oregon' regulations may be so stringent that they have the effect of simply shutting down some local manufacturers.

10. Increasing damage awards for liability, medical lawsuits.

Oregon law imposes a \$500,000 limit on non-economic damages that can be awarded in medical and wrongful death lawsuits. Economic damages are unlimited. Limits on non-economic damages keep professional liability insurance policies affordable for physicians and health care providers, specifically those in high risk specialties. Without the limits, Oregonians would face serious challenges accessing specialty physicians and health care providers throughout the state.

11. Elimination of the small business tax cut.

Governor Brown has proposed to eliminate the 'small business tax cut' in her 2017 budget. OSCC believes the new tax structure for small business should be expanded, not eliminated.

12. Taxes not supported by the business community.

There will be enormous pressure on the business community to support additional taxes to help bridge the 2017-19 state budget deficit. Above all else, OSCC believes that Oregon business should be unified in which tax proposals it will support and which it will oppose.